

Norfolk
Department
of Utilities

Monthly
Report

Quality
Service

At Work

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Utilities earns four gold ratings in City safety audit

The Department of Utilities swept the gold in the yearly safety audit conducted by City Safety and Health Officer Dan Hurley. This is the fourth year Utilities has

captured top honors in the audit and the first year the department has been given the gold status in all areas – water production, field operations and administration – which encompass all Utilities divisions and bureaus.

"Utilities runs excellent safety programs," said Hurley. "I am always impressed with the support the department gives the committee and employees."

Every year Hurley evaluates the safety program of each department in the City, awarding points for employee participation, communication, critical training areas, inspections and certifications. The purpose of the audit is to determine the effectiveness of the departments' safety and health programs and their compliance to requirements set by the City of Norfolk and the Occupa-

The keys to success are

**Training,
Support,**



See **Safety** on page 2



Safety Committee Members Dennis Hairston, Johnny Blanchard, Ron Knight and John West review work gloves for safety features, an important function of the group.

Safety Officer John Tokarz (above left) begins one of many safety seminars held regularly in the Department of Utilities. **David Rush** (above) from Virginia Department of Transportation conducts flagger certification at the Utilities Operations Center.

Involvement!

Department of Utilities hosts VDOT work zone safety class

Construction and repair work can disrupt traffic, slow it down, and take motorists on unfamiliar alternate routes. At times like that, field operations such as Norfolk's Department of Utilities or Public Works can use all the positive public relations they can get.

Believe it or not, that's where the work crew's flagger comes in.

The latest seminar in the Department of Utilities' safety training program was Flagger Recertification held at the Utilities Operations Center on Feb. 25th and 26th. In that workshop, instructor David Rush of the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) emphasized that the primary goals of a flagger are to reduce confusion, make traffic flow safely, and improve public relations.

During the 3-hour seminar, Rush emphasized that flagging regulations set by VDOT are there for the protection of the flagger and the worker, as well as the motorist. Motorists will be less likely to make driving errors that could endanger themselves and workers if the flagger:

- Provides proper advance notice of traffic disruption through signage and markers,
- Wears the proper safety clothing,
- Uses the approved flagging equipment, and
- Follows the correct procedures.

In doing so, the flagger also will make the driver feel more comfortable with the situation and reduce possible negative feelings about the change in traffic.

In the past year VDOT has revised specifications for work zone traffic control devices and subsequently changed regulations to reflect the new requirements. This seminar acquainted attendees with the new regulations and refreshed their knowledge of proper procedures.

At the end of the class, Rush administered a comprehensive test and recertified those who passed the examination.

Besides Department of Utilities employees, representatives from the Norfolk Department of Public Works and the Hampton Roads Sanitation District attended the class. ♦



Spring Safety Tips

Spring is in the air...and with it comes yard work! One of the first tools out of the shed is the lawn mower. Before you pull that starter cord, do the following:

- **Dust off the owners manual and read it!**
- **Fill the mower with *NEW* gasoline! Last year's gasoline will contain gum deposits that can damage the engine.**
- **Check the oil and replace it, if you did not do so in the fall.**
- **Visually inspect the controls, engine, body, wheels and blade. Tighten loose bolts and screws. Replace defective parts.**

Now you're ready for the yard - NOT the repair shop.

Safety from page 1

tional Safety and Health Agency (OSHA).

Utilities racked up three perfect scores of 120 and one nearly perfect score of 115. According to Hurley, the gold status awarded to Utilities' administrative program is one of only two awarded to city administrative units this year.

In his letter of commendation to the department, Hurley emphasized that the establishment of a safety committee for each division and the implementation of regular safety training are two factors that contribute to the excellence of Utilities' safety program.

Department of Utilities Safety Officer, John Tokarz, attributes the success of the department's safety program to the hard work of the employees and the support of management.

"I am so pleased that the Department of Utilities has an excellent safety program," said Utilities Director Kristen Lentz. "It shows that we truly value the department's greatest resource — its employees. By protecting ourselves at work, we show the respect we have for our jobs and each other."

"Management has made safety a part of the department's goals and objectives," said Tokarz. "This gives the employees the support they need to build an effective program."

Tokarz added that management works with employees to improve the safety of work procedures, purchases premium quality safety gear, funds safety awards and provides employees the time to attend safety-training classes.

"The program could not work without that type of support," said Tokarz. ♦